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FOREWORD

A major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate inservice growth and school improvement. Consequently, requirements include not only meeting the standards of the Utah State Office of Education, but also completing a school evaluation every six years.

School evaluation is that effort by the local school staff to take a comprehensive look at the school's program, operation, and effect. The school determines how closely its purposes and philosophy coincide with its actual practices and the degree to which its stated objectives are being reached. It is a three-phased program: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, January 23 and 24, 2003, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to meet the requirements referred to above.

The entire staff of Hunter High School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the Visiting Team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Mike Fraser is commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for the generally fine program being provided for Hunter High School students, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more adequately meet the needs of the students of Hunter High School.

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Bob Ward Supervisor, School Lunch

HUNTER HIGH SCHOOL
ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

Mike Fraser	Principal
Dave Rettie.....	Assistant Principal
Curt Noel.....	Assistant Principal
Devon Hartley	Assistant Principal

Counseling

Jim Brusatto	Counselor
Brett Joos.....	Counselor
Marilyn Kline.....	Counselor
Beth Pasker	Counselor
Liz Mangrum.....	Counselor
Claudia Travis (Dept.Chair).....	Counselor
Sandra Summers	Counselor

Support Staff

Eric Dickey	Custodian
Claudia Edvalson	Receptionist
Elaine Fairbourne.....	Custodian
Lonnie Farnsworth	Custodian
Linda Farr.....	Media Secretary
Jason Hauer	Resource Officer
Richard Humphrey.....	Custodian
Verna Jones	Bookkeeper
Dennis Kelly	Custodian
Ruby Larsen	Attendance Secretary
Lynne Neilson	Counseling/Registrar
Rocky Scholz	Custodian
Pamela Skogg.....	Principal's Secretary
Maxine Smith.....	Custodian
Cindy Trujillo.....	Career Secretary
Doug Woolsey.....	Head Custodian
Holly Ziegenhorn	Resource Officer

Faculty

James Adams.....	Science
Joni Akbarian	English
Julie Allen	Mathematics
Kathleen Andreason.....	Business
DeAnn Arriola.....	Mathematics
Dave Austin.....	Photography
Marilyn Baigue,	French
William Bartley.....	Russian
Caren Beeman	English
Nat Bowen.....	Drafting
Brandon Burt.....	Physical Education
Teraha Bushnell	English
Cody Case	Mathematics
Pam Child.....	Y.I.C.
Kevin Christensen	Drivers Ed.
Chad Coon.....	English
John Copier	Automotive
Jared Covili	English
Terry Cummings	Social Studies
Harry Davis	English
Faith Dolney.....	Mathematics
James Duignan	Social Studies
Meredith Elliott	Social Studies
Barbara Fields	Drama
Dave Filimoehala	Resource
Elaine Fukushima.....	Social Studies
Suzanne Fullmer	FACS
Cindy Hafen	FACS
Bob Harbrecht.....	Mathematics/Science
Kathryn Heart.....	English
Scott Henderson	Mathematics
Angie Holden	Resource
Ken Hopkins	Y.I.C.
Tera Hunsaker	Resource
Sherry Jardine	Health
Debbe Jones	ESL
Roger Ketchum	Science
Gary Kroll	Drivers Ed.
Chris Krueger.....	Social Studies
Kathy Latimer	Social Studies
Anne Lewin.....	Science
Emily Liddell	Resource
Ford Locey	English
Ilene Lofgren.....	English

Faculty (Cont.)

Marsha Lowe.....	Resource
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Steve Marsing	Physical Education
Chris Mehner.....	Mathematics
Jerry Miller.....	Science
Jim Miller	Graphics
Mori Morris.....	English
Karen Munson.....	FACS
Pat Newbold.....	Social Studies
Hal Newman	Social Studies
Thomas Olsen	Science
Pam Olson	Mathematics
Susan Palmer.....	English
Mark Pearce	Vocal Music
Beverly Peek	Nursing
Anne Petersen	Social Studies
Glade Player.....	Science
Anne Quigley	Art
Eric Rackley.....	English
Chris Rydalch.....	Health
Paul Salin	Woods
Martha Sample	Resource, Self-Contained
Walt Scholfield	Art
Adam Shumway.....	Social Studies
Jeff Sillito.....	Business
Milo Smart	Home Building
Heather Sonne.....	Physical Education
Deanna Sorensen.....	Mathematics
Ken Spencer	Computer Technology
Craig Stauffer.....	Business
Lorna Strong	Physical Education
Todd Summerhays	Science
Carl Sundell.....	Art
Dee Sundell	Spanish
Steve Talbot	Instrumental Music
Stan Taylor.....	Art
Jo Thompson.....	Media Specialist
Larry Tiffany.....	English
Jonathan Tuttle.....	Science
Holly Wamsley	Mathematics
Scott Watson	Electronics
Wes Wilcken.....	Drivers Ed.
John Young.....	Resource, Self-Contained

HUNTER HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

**The mission of Hunter High School
is to provide a safe and positive learning environment
where each student can succeed
in a global society.**

BELIEF STATEMENTS

WE BELIEVE...

Each student can learn.

Each student should possess the skills and knowledge to function as a productive member of society.

Each student will graduate with marketable job skills which ensure gainful employment.

A diversified and interrelated curriculum is essential to accommodate a wide variety of student learning styles.

Each student will gain knowledge and value lifelong learning.

Each student lives up to expectations; therefore, expectations of educators, community, home, and self will be set at a high level.

Each student will develop a respect for themselves and others and be responsible for his/her decisions and actions.

Each student is unique and valued.

Each student should be given the opportunity to reach his/her potential in all areas of academic, artistic, vocational, social, emotional, and physical development.

The relationship between teachers and students is a critical element in the learning process.

Parent involvement is essential to students in the learning process.

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Wendy Chalk, Accreditation Consultant, Visiting Team Chairperson

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Carolyn Schubach, Hillcrest Junior High, Murray School District

Mont Widerberg, Alta High School, Jordan School District

Robin Bowden, Syracuse Junior High, Davis School District

Robyn Roberts, East High School, Salt Lake School District

Ann Adams, Davis District Office, Davis School District

Spencer Weiler, American Fork Junior High, Alpine School District

Joyce Gray, West High School, Salt Lake School District

Betsy Hunt, Madeleine Choir School (private school)

Doug Finch, Lone Peak High School, Alpine School District

VISITING TEAM REPORT

HUNTER HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Hunter High School is a large urban high school located in West Valley City, Utah. It is the newest high school in the Granite School District, as well as the largest. Hunter High School opened its doors in the fall of 1990 with 1,600 students in grades 10-12, and a teaching staff of 65. During the past 12 years, the student population has grown to 2,200 students. As a result, the teaching staff has also increased. Hunter High School typically employs between 79 and 86 teachers, depending on fluctuating district allotments.

The community served by Hunter High School is comprised primarily of middle-class suburban single-family homes. The school community has undergone changes in ethnic diversity over the past twelve years. In 1990-91, 7 percent (or approximately 116) students out of 1,660 reported a primary home language other than English. Today, this figure has increased to 28 percent, or 616 students. According to 2001 data provided by the administration, 1 percent of the student body is Native American, 17 percent is Latino, 4 percent is Asian, 4 percent is Pacific Islander, 1 percent is African-American, and 73 percent is white.

a) *What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?*

The administrative team and school leadership have made a significant effort to collect and analyze student achievement data available to the school. In particular, the school examined ATE data collected over four years, Advanced Placement Test scores, Stanford 9 data for last year's juniors, CRT data for Science for 1997-2000, and CRT data in Mathematics from 1997-2002. AP scores were disaggregated to reveal trends in student achievement. From this data, the school discovered that, over the past four years, more students have been taking AP tests. At the same time, the passing rate (scores of 3.0 or better) has remained fairly consistent (from 68-71 percent). Science CRT scores revealed that Hunter High School students are achieving below district and State averages, but have been showing gains in performance each year since the most recent edition of the test was adopted. The school is also experiencing achievement gains on the new edition of the Biology CRT. Analysis of Geometry and Elementary Algebra CRT test data reveals a three-year decrease in student achievement.

Performance data for several student subgroups was also disaggregated and analyzed. The school should be commended for making a concerted effort to compare CRT performance by gender and ethnicity. Through this analysis, it was revealed that females and males performed approximately the same on Elementary Algebra and Geometry CRT tests; however, males appear to

outperform females in Biology. Information regarding the percentage of males vs. females that actually took the test is needed to substantiate this finding.

Last year, Hunter High School conducted an opinion survey of staff, parents, and students. Students selected to participate in the survey were matched for academic achievement, gender, and ethnicity. The school made a concerted effort to obtain a similar representative sampling of parents. Parent surveys were given to students to take home. Overall, 150 students from each grade level (10th –12th) participated in the survey. Although all the parents of these students were invited to respond, only 70 percent of the surveys were returned.

According to the administration, the survey revealed that 80 percent of the students feel they have “access and know-how to utilize the learning resources (e.g., technology, media center) that help them with their work.” This is in contrast to their classroom experience, in which only 40 percent of students find technology being used. Sixty percent of those surveyed feel they can participate in all school activities that interest them, and the same number believe the school offers activities that address their interests. With regard to classroom instruction, over 70 percent of the students surveyed reported that teachers help them in class, 75 percent believe their teachers expect them to do their best and succeed in school, and 65 percent of the students feel their teachers will give them individual help outside of class time if they need it. These findings support the observations of the Visiting Team that the majority of the Hunter High School staff is committed to the students they serve. It would be helpful to Hunter’s analysis and future school improvement efforts if they investigate further to reveal what trends exist by teacher, department, grade level, gender, or ethnicity in the 25-35 percent (500-770 students) of the students who do not feel they are getting adequate support. The academic achievement of adolescents is often a reflection of the relationships they have with their teachers. Perhaps, in identifying which student subgroups currently feel underserved and focusing some of the school’s resources in building relationships with these students, the staff might increase achievement in this population.

Along with identifying many of the school’s strengths, the perception surveys also revealed areas for further investigation by the staff. Only 35 percent of the students believe the school administration includes students in decisions that affect students, and only 45 percent of the students believe their teachers keep them well informed of their performance in class. The student survey also revealed that cheating is a significant problem on campus.

As they continue to systematically collect, analyze, and manage a data collection system, the staff should consider establishing performance standards for their work. Performance standards will allow the staff to determine an acceptable level for student, parent, and staff satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the system as a whole. For example, currently only 45 percent of students feel they are kept informed by their teachers. Therefore, the question to the faculty should be “Is this an acceptable level of satisfaction?” If not, what would be? Is 65 percent, 75 percent, or perhaps 90 percent the standard Hunter High School should set for its performance? Setting clear performance standards will assist the administration

and staff in deciding what issues need to be addressed, as well as when changes in policy, programs, or procedures have resulted in the desired effect. A performance standard will also assist the school in strategically abandoning efforts that are either not working or are no longer needed.

- b) *What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?*

Hunter High School is strongly encouraged to continue its effort to systematically collect and analyze pertinent student data to guide decisions made by the school. It is suggested that the administrative staff collaborate with the district in designing an effective management system that can be utilized by different stakeholders within the school community. This effort should extend to include data not included in the profile. Attendance records, Language Arts CRT scores, district assessments, course grades, graduation rates, and disciplinary referrals would provide additional information the staff could utilize in identifying student achievement gaps by subgroups (i.e., gender, ethnicity, grade level, socioeconomic status) and monitor the effectiveness of school improvement activities over time.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- Hunter High School recognizes the need to collect and analyze data **prior** to deciding what school improvement efforts to undertake. In its quest to become a “data-driven” organization, the school should extend current practice to incorporating the collection and analysis of data in order to monitor and evaluate improvement efforts. Currently, the school has not identified a means of measuring the effectiveness of school goals or proposed focus group activities (see action plan).
- In analyzing student achievement data, the staff should also explore possible correlations between student achievement and other measures of student success, such as attendance, course grades, participation in school activities, etc. Some questions that drive further inquiry may include: Do we have students who attend regularly, but are not performing? Are high achieving students making adequate yearly progress in our classes? Are students who participate in school activities more likely to achieve? Are there patterns or trends in attendance and achievement that can be attributed to certain grade levels and genders, grade levels and ethnicities, grade levels and subject areas?
- Lastly, the staff may want to pursue examining the correlation between class grades and CRT scores. Are students passing classes but failing to pass state tests? Are students passing state tests, but performing poorly in class? How do we reconcile these differences? As schools move to a standards-based curriculum, assessment methods, grading systems, and data collection will need to come into alignment with measuring and monitoring student learning. Hunter High School has taken a first step in this direction.

CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

- a) *To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?*

Prior to the conceptualization of *Collaborating for Student Achievement*, Hunter High School implemented a process for conducting a yearly needs assessment and using this information to form interdisciplinary committees for addressing school concerns. All members of the staff and administration serve on interdisciplinary committees or focus groups. Additionally, many members of the classified staff function as team members. Although parents and students were invited to participate, representation from these stakeholders was limited at best.

Despite the exemplary efforts on the part of the administration, accreditation team, focus group chairs, and staff, the administration realizes that the *Collaborating for Student Achievement* self-study process was not fully employed by the school. Nevertheless, the Visiting Team recognizes that the school and leadership made a sincere effort to do a thorough analysis of the school's strengths and limitations and commends them for their effort.

As the school moves into a new year of growth and renewal, the Visiting Team highly recommends that some of the staff take advantage of state resources for this training in the new process. This would include attending and serving on future Visiting Teams, seeking the assistance of state facilitators trained in this process, and maintaining contact with members of the present Visiting Team.

- b) *To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?*

The school's profile, in conjunction with survey data, supports the school's analysis of its strengths and limitations. However, additional data and analysis are required to pinpoint achievement gaps, student concerns, and potential improvement targets.

Hunter High School has initiated steps for improving its profiling efforts in the future.

CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Hunter High School's desired results for student learning are as follows:

1. Using a variety of methodologies, students will be able to process information and use this information in various forms of communication.
2. Students will learn the relevance and practical application of information and skills they are learning for use in their careers and/or educational goals.
3. Students will learn a variety of problem solving and critical thinking strategies and how to apply such strategies in individual and group situations.
4. Students will learn, possess, and use the skills necessary to be lifelong learners in order to participate in a global society.
5. Students will learn the concepts of values education: respect, integrity, responsibility, trust, cultural diversity, and caring, which will enable them to become productive members of society.
6. All members of the educational community—administration, counselors, teachers, parents and students—will be accountable in the learning process.
7. Methods of instruction and goals for student learning will take into consideration the involvement of parents, students, and community as integral parts of the learning process.

Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:

- a) *To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?*

In examining the level of understanding and acceptance of the school's mission statement, the Visiting Team determined that the majority of stakeholders understood and supported the desire to "provide a safe and positive environment where each student can succeed." The mission represents a longstanding commitment for the school. The staff and faculty revisited and recommitted themselves to this mission during the accreditation process. Although no one at Hunter High School could quote the mission statement, most were able to express the themes of safety and career and college preparation.

In reaffirming the validity and direction of the mission statement and vision for Hunter High School, continued efforts to regularly include voices of all stakeholders (new staff, parents, and students) are necessary. Currently, in addition to a schoolwide mission statement, each department has developed its own statement. Is it possible for the mission of the school to serve as the mission for each department?

- b) *To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?*

The belief statements at Hunter High School were developed in conjunction with the mission statement. Hunter High School has the infrastructure (subcommittees) to support many of their belief statements. Some teachers were observed emphasizing real-life applications, marketable job skills, and care for students. However, faculty acceptance of all belief statements was not evident throughout the school community. For example, there appeared to be a lack of diversified and interrelated curricula to meet the varying learning styles of students.

Since beliefs represent core principles intended to guide adults in making the decisions that affect student learning, the Visiting Team suggests that Hunter High School revisit some of its belief statements. The school needs to keep in mind that organizational belief statements should be **limited to principles for which the adults—not students—within the organization hold themselves accountable**. Although the State of Utah might desire “Each student will live up to expectations...” as a result of its educational system, this may not represent a belief or value of the students. However, the organizational belief that “As models for our students, we will hold ourselves accountable for high standards of professional conduct” reframes the belief of living up to expectations in terms of the adults who serve in the school.

- c) *To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?*

The staff understands that the DRSLs were utilized in part to develop the mission and belief statements. The mission and beliefs were developed prior to the DRSLs.

DRSLs are the learning goals a school community has for all students. They answer the question, “What should all students know and be able to do in order to be successful in the 21st century?” Additionally, the school’s DRSLs should reflect the Utah Life Skills adopted by the Utah State Board of Education. In reviewing Hunter High School’s DRSLs, the Visiting Team noted that the sixth and seventh DRSLs appear to be contrary to this definition and would, perhaps, be better suited to being belief statements. As such, the school community may want to refine its list of DRSLs and belief statements before committing to them.

Lastly, it is recommended that Hunter High School pursue indicators and methods for gathering evidence of student achievement related specifically to school DRSLs.

Curriculum Development:

- a) *To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards (i.e., Utah Core Curriculum or national standards for courses not addressed in the Core)?*

There is evidence that many of the departments are either aligned with or are in the process of aligning themselves with the Utah State Core Curriculum and/or national standards, where applicable. A school curriculum committee exists, and teachers have a strong desire to meet the expectations of teaching to the Core Curriculum. The teachers in each department are meeting regularly and collaborating within their departments to discuss curricula.

It is important to assure that the written curriculum, taught curriculum, and assessed curriculum are all aligned. One common concern voiced by the staff is the need to incorporate the teaching of content literacy skills in every department.

As state and national tests of reading comprehension focus more on the skills of interpreting informational and functional text (e.g., 67 percent of the Stanford 9 Test) and less on traditional recreational reading, all teachers will need to develop the skills needed to assist student in comprehending difficult text. Some departments at Hunter High School are already making specific efforts to address this concern.

Schoolwide and departmental data from the profile should help clarify additional student learning needs and drive curriculum development decisions in the future.

- b) *To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?*

There have been great efforts to develop both schoolwide and departmental desired results for student learning (DRSLs). The schoolwide DRSLs are posted in each classroom, and some departmental DRSLs already support the schoolwide DRSLs. The original intent of the DRSLs in the school improvement process was to provide a **collective vision** for student learning. This collective vision would provide a unifying goal for curriculum and instruction that transcends individual courses or departments. The school's DRSLs would also provide an avenue by which different content areas could work collaboratively to achieve these overarching school goals. The creation of departmental DRSLs, in addition to schoolwide DRSLs, may diminish the systemic effort needed to achieve the school's vision for students. The Visiting Team recommends that all the stakeholders review each department's DRSLs and the schoolwide DRSLs to establish one common set of DRSLs for the entire organization. The school's identification of a limited number of common DRSLs will maximize the use and focus of limited resources (i.e., time, money, energy, etc.) in attaining the school's vision.

Quality Instructional Design:

- a) *To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?*

During the Visiting Team's two-day visit, some of the school staff were observed using variety of learning experiences to engage students in the learning process. However, the majority of classrooms observed during the course of the visit employed direct instruction followed by collaboration, independent student exploration, and classroom discussions to explore ideas, concepts, and principles. Some teachers included other research-based "best practice" activities such as the use of technology, cooperative learning groups, role-playing, hands-on activities, problem-based inquiry, laboratory activities, and peer tutoring. The Visiting Team applauds the efforts of those teachers who understand and use a wide variety of instructional methods and recommends that the staff as a whole continue to expand its repertoire of research-based "best practices."

The school's Professional Development Committee oversees the allocation of funds for many of the school's professional growth activities. Individual teachers may request funding to attend conferences and workshops. Teachers have been encouraged to bring material back to the school and to instruct others on the concepts learned. Resources have been made available through land trust grants to support professional development efforts.

To ensure that funding for professional growth is used wisely, the Professional Development Committee is encouraged to seek and utilize validated research principles for effective staff development. Current research on adult learning reveals that only five percent of participants attending a seminar-type workshop will use this information to improve classroom practices. To maximize the future use of school funds, the committee may want to incorporate the research findings from the National Staff Development Council in its guidelines for granting requests.

b) To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?

The Visiting Team was impressed by the high degree of dedication within the teaching staff. The upcoming IB program, as well as increased student involvement in the honors and AP programs, shows efforts to meet the needs of gifted learners. Peer tutoring and co-teaching in resource/special ed. and basic classes are also being used.

A reoccurring theme throughout the school is addressing the needs of ESL students. Teachers have expressed concern over their class sizes and the increased number of students with special needs.

Teachers have a desire to receive additional training and assistance in meeting the needs of diverse learners. In order to strengthen the DRSLs and meet the needs of diverse learners, "best practices" should be explored further (i.e., Socratic seminars, cooperative learning, thinking strategies, project-based learning, etc.) to bring higher levels of understanding and increased student achievement across the curriculum.

- c) *To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?*

Efforts have been made to provide additional opportunities that support student learning, such as individual teaching assistance after school, 9th period credit makeup, aides in the classroom, daily attendance monitoring, and at-risk student tracking.

The Visiting Team recommends that additional strategies, programs, and resources be researched to address areas of concern and impact such as diverse needs, No Child Left Behind requirements, test scores, etc.

Quality Assessment Systems:

- a) *To what extent has the staff developed classroom or schoolwide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?*

As a result of multiple classroom observations (recognizing that the Visiting Team came on the second and third days of the semester) and various conversations with multiple stakeholders, the following conclusion was reached related to assessment: Some of the departments at Hunter High School have made noticeable efforts to create assessments of student learning that are aligned with the essential knowledge, skills, and performance standards for student learning. Concrete examples of these efforts can be found in the Math, Science, Business, Family and Consumer Science, and English Departments (though this is not an exhaustive list).

Performance standards do not appear to be fully developed on a schoolwide basis.

The Visiting Team's recommendation is for Hunter High School to continue alignment with state and national standards that clearly define expectations for students.

- b) *To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?*

The following types of assessment tools were observed during the visit: open-ended questions, portfolios, selected response, oral presentations, projects, group assignments, and peer evaluations. However, the Visiting Team cannot comment on the frequency of use of these different tools in the classroom. In addition, the majority of different assessment tools appear to be used almost exclusively by a limited number of faculty members, although these faculty members use them on a frequent basis. The Visiting Team was unable to determine whether or not the majority of teachers use a wide variety of assessment tools.

As the Visiting Team discussed assessment at Hunter High School with various stakeholders, it appeared that classroom assessment focus more on establishing a student's grade than on determining the degree of learning in the classroom by

each student. Few types of assessments appeared to be used formatively as instructional tools for promoting student achievement.

It is recommended that the faculty at Hunter High School work to develop standardized assessment tools that may be useful across the curriculum to monitor student progress and inform instructional decisions.

- c) *To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?*

According to students, most of the assessments of student learning and grading practices are fair. However, the accreditation self-study for Hunter High School lacks sufficient disaggregated data to verify the claims of fairness by the students, especially the ethnically diverse population. Certain questions arise related to fairness and equity, centering on equal access to knowledge for all students.

Hunter High School's self-study claims that "various ethnic populations at Hunter High School mirror the achievement of the Caucasian" (p. 36). The Visiting Team recommends that Hunter High School verify the validity of this statement through further data analysis.

It is recommended that Hunter High School further investigate the development of performance standards and assessment tools for monitoring and evaluating students' performance. These tools should pay particular attention to essential knowledge and skills identified for all students in all classes.

Leadership for School Improvement:

- a) *To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?*

The school's leadership recognizes the need for continuous improvement of the school's academic learning climate and teaching practices. To this end, the leadership conducts a yearly needs assessment as a means of identifying areas needing to be addressed by the school. This assessment frequently focuses on how the learning climate can be improved. For example, the school currently has committees for safety, social morale, Renaissance, and Community of Caring working on issues that would affect the learning climate. The leadership at Hunter High School recognizes the link between school culture and climate and student achievement. Thus, the leadership and staff have taken steps to ensure that school climate issues are addressed rather than ignored.

The Professional Development Committee oversees and approves requests by individuals (most often) and groups (less frequently) for professional growth activities. According to the staff, these activities are typically approved on a first-come, first-served basis. Despite the limitations of this process, the administration, as well as the majority of the staff and committee members, are

committed to improving the instructional process and thereby improving student achievement.

As Hunter High School continues to develop and incorporate research-based “best practices” into their classrooms and organization, decisions regarding what type of professional growth activities to support need to be addressed. Research shows some professional development activities are more likely to lead to improved teaching than others. Hunter High School might benefit from reviewing this research and using this information to make better decisions regarding the allocation of professional development monies targeted at improving teaching.

- b) *To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?*

The leadership at Hunter High School has gone to great lengths to employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative. This recognition and the school’s commitment to moving the organization and classrooms in this direction is perhaps the school’s greatest strength.

Although the school community has much to learn in moving in this direction, the Visiting Team is confident that the school will continue to improve its methods and professional relationships on behalf of students.

- c) *To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?*

Hunter High School has taken its first step toward developing a comprehensive assessment system. Currently, standardized test data are the measurement tools the school uses to analyze instructional effectiveness. Therefore, monitoring of student progress takes place on a yearly basis. Additional tools will be needed to measure and track student progress in achieving the desired results for student Learning, as well as progressing toward important content standards in each content area. The current system provides an incomplete picture of student achievement and therefore does not provide clear insight regarding instructional effectiveness.

The Visiting Team is confident that the school has the leadership needed to build a comprehensive assessment system over the next six years.

- d) *To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?*

The leadership of the school provides skillful stewardship. Schoolwide policies and operational procedures are typically consistent with the school’s beliefs and mission, and are designed to maximize opportunities for successful learning. The allocation and use of resources (e.g., human, physical, monetary and instructional) are often aligned with the school’s goals. The leadership has established the

foundations for collaborative decision making and routinely seeks input from key stakeholders. With the implementation of recommendations from this report, the Visiting Team is confident that, under the current leadership (both formal and informal), the management, operations, and resources of the school will reach a new level of effectiveness and efficiency.

- e) *To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?*

Hunter High School has not had sufficient time or opportunity to incorporate the school's DRSLs into the school's decision-making process. The DRSLs are fairly new to the school and require some refinement before they are ready to become institutionalized.

- f) *To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?*

The school leadership has made a concerted effort to incorporate parents and classified staff into the decision-making process. The school site council and the standing School Improvement Committees provide opportunities to involve the school community. Additionally, through student surveys, the school made an effort to bring student voice into the process. The SEOP process, school newsletters, student handbooks, and the school's Web site are just a few of the methods employed by Hunter High School to reach parents and the school community.

The leadership and staff recognize the value of building collaborative networks of support with community members and groups. The school has made a considerable effort to develop extended learning opportunities for students and coordinate community resources to support student achievement.

Community Building:

- a) *To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?*

The Visiting Team was impressed with the evidence that indicates that most students feel a part of the school community and are invited to participate in school activities, organizations, and clubs. Students also feel that teachers are fair and very helpful both inside and outside the classroom. Furthermore, students consider their counselors and vocational personnel to be helpful and eager to assist them. As a result of the Visiting Team's interviews and observations, it is clear that Hunter High School embraces diversity and differences among the student population, as evidenced by the desire to meet the unique needs of individual learners and offer programs that support inclusion throughout the school. It is evident that the faculty is supportive of student participation in a

number of focus groups to build morale and school involvement in a variety of areas, including Community of Caring, diversity, Renaissance, social morale, etc. There appears to be cooperation and collegiality within departments; however, the Visiting Team feels there is a need to build upon and expand collaborative relationships and cooperation among academic and vocational departments throughout the school.

- b) *To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?*

Evidence indicates that the school is aware that parental involvement is a critical component for student success. It is clear that efforts are being made to inform parents and include them in the operations of Hunter High School. For example, parents serve as active participants on the school's decision-making body (the Representative Council). Parent groups also reported that the school is highly responsive to parental concerns and the administration is consistent in extending invitations to attend extracurricular activities and sporting events, as well as fine arts and multicultural performances. The school utilizes the vast amount of resources in the surrounding community in its vocational and career outreach programs. Clearly, the "Heart of Hunter" event provides an opportunity for the school to foster a positive relationship with the community at large. Hunter High School is considered a "hub" of the community, as is evidenced by the continual utilization of the school plant on evenings and weekends. The school communicates with its stakeholders in a variety of ways, including newsletters, recorded phone messages, accessible websites, and "good news" postcards. In addition, parents are encouraged to attend PTA meetings, back-to-school nights, and parent-teacher conferences offered *throughout the school year*. The Visiting Team recommends that the school continue to work toward including parents in all functions of the school (including student learning), as well as improving attendance at critical parent meetings.

Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:

- a) *To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?*

The school's organizational culture supports school improvement initiatives and professional development. Hunter High School's staff is encouraged to take advantage of subject area workshops and inservice opportunities offered by district, state, and national sources. At the beginning of every year the staff, school leadership, and the Representative Council review student achievement data and other factual information to identify areas needing improvement. Professional development opportunities are designed and made available during the week prior to the beginning of school and as opportunities arise during the school year.

However, The school's organizational system is inconsistent in supporting professional development. Allocation of professional development resources is often the result of a specific request for funds, rather than alignment to organizational goals and/or quality of the professional growth activity. Similarly, the organization currently lacks an effective process for ensuring that new skills and knowledge gained through professional growth activities are implemented effectively at the classroom or department level.

The Visiting Team strongly recommends that continued professional development include attention to the Schoolwide Indicators of Quality: Instructional and Organizational Effectiveness, as defined by NSSE.

- b) *To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?*

It is evident that the school administration actively supports individual and staff opportunities for teacher development. It is clear to members of the Visiting Team that Hunter High School provides a positive and nurturing culture for both students and teachers. The overwhelming response among teachers is that the administration helps to create the climate for change and continuous improvement in the academic curriculum. It is evident from interviews and data that vocational and career training for students is a continual focus for faculty and staff. The Visiting Team's recommendation includes moving from a somewhat fragmented and departmentalized organization to a more systemic collaborative approach to curriculum development and instructional practices. In addition, the Visiting Team suggests that more attention be given to meeting the academic and social needs of ethnic and diverse student populations.

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES (NASCU) STANDARDS I-X

Standard I – Educational Program

Hunter High School has met this standard.

Standard II – Student Personnel Services

Hunter High School has met this standard.

Standard III – School Plant and Equipment

Hunter High School has met this standard.

Standard IV – Library Media Program

Hunter High School has met this standard.

Standard V – Records

Hunter High School has met this standard.

Standard VI – School Improvement (This is addressed in the self-study.)

Hunter High School has met this standard.

Standard VII – Preparation of Personnel

Hunter High School has two teachers who have been given eligibility exceptions for this year.

Standard VIII – Administration

Hunter High School has met this standard.

Standard IX – Teacher Load

In the yearly report NASCU, cited Hunter High School for having 27 teachers who have student loads over 210.

According to the administration, 11 of these teachers are teaching one additional class, and one teacher is teaching two additional classes. The school's list of teachers with excessive assignments reveals that these assignments span the breath of content area disciplines. Therefore, it would not be feasible to hire several credentialed part-time teachers to teach one or two classes. Additionally, the district decreased Hunter High School's FTE allocation from 85.0 FTE to 77.9 FTE this year, although the number of students remained almost the same.

Standard X – Activities

Hunter High School has met this standard.

CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN

- a) *To what extent is the schoolwide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?*

The action plan attempts to align improvement efforts to the school's DRSLs, rather than addressing student achievement gaps revealed through the profiling

process. Additionally, the action plan reflects some of the work of the school's committees rather than focusing on recommendations that surfaced during an in-depth analysis of research-based best practices at both the departmental and organizational levels.

The site administration is aware of this concern and is taking steps to bring the analysis of the school profile, as well as the departmental and focus group analyses, into alignment with the school's action plan.

- b) *To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, schoolwide and systemwide?*

The majority of the Hunter High School participated in the development of the school's action plan. It is assumed that, having had the opportunity for input, the staff will work collaboratively to ensure that the plan is actualized.

The current action plan will require some revision to reflect the major recommendations resulting from the site visit. The Visiting Team is confident that the site leadership will work to create awareness and commitment of the staff to these recommendations as well.

- c) *How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the schoolwide action plan appear to be?*

The current action plan does not articulate an effective method for monitoring the accomplishments of the schoolwide action plan. As a result of the site visit, the administrative team understands the importance of collecting and using data to monitor the school's progress and to periodically evaluate the effectiveness of improvement efforts. The current action plan will require some revision to reflect this recommendation of the Visiting Team.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends the administration, staff, and parents for their pioneering effort in establishing a collaborative process for addressing school goals. Hunter High School has been very proactive in developing a culture of continuous improvement at the site.
- The Visiting Team commends the staff and administration for their dedication to the school, its students, and the educational process. It was evident during the visit that the Hunter High School community cares about the students and parents it serves, and is willing to continually grow and learn on their behalf. There is a

strong and positive academic learning climate and a culture of high expectations for the students and staff.

- The Visiting Team commends the administration team for its attention and commitment to building a learning community that empowers all stakeholders to participate in school decisions. Additionally, the administrative team is to be commended for recognizing the need to move the organization to greater levels of effectiveness based on research-based practices and data-driven decision making.

Recommendations:

- The school should continue developing a comprehensive assessment system for gathering, analyzing, and using pertinent data. These efforts should extend to gathering and using data to monitor and evaluate improvement efforts as they are implemented and refined. Revision of the school's current action plan to reflect this need might be a good first step for the school. Individual departments, as well as the entire organization, should consider what assessment data (tests, portfolio, projects, CRTs, etc.) would allow reasonable interpretation of what students can do and provide sufficient evidence of achievement of the school's learning goals (i.e., DRSLs and content standards).
- The school needs to explore ways to incorporate the use of the NSSE rubrics and Department Essential Questions in its yearly analysis of the organization's strengths and limitations. The seven NSSE rubrics represent "best practices" for the organization and should provide a guideline for future school improvement efforts. Additionally, the Departmental Essential Questions provide a framework for analyzing the departmental practices based on the research-based best practices for curriculum, instruction, assessment, and professional development.
- The whole staff needs to engage in collective inquiry with regard to the research of best practices and teaching/assessing DRSLs. According to the need assessments conducted last spring, the majority of the staff expressed concern about meeting the needs of the school's ESL population. Many of the "best practices" identified in the literature can address this challenge. Additionally, as the school moves to explicitly teaching DRSLs in every classroom, the leadership and staff are strongly encouraged to spend some time investigating the literature on what other schools have learned regarding the best way to teach and assess critical thinking, problem solving, lifelong learning, and effective communication (written and oral) across the curriculum.
- To guide organizational development, the school needs to come to consensus on a single vision for student learning (i.e., one set of DRSLs) that transcends all content areas and unites the staff in a single purpose, focusing the school. Currently each department operates and functions in alignment with its own mission and set of DRSLs. This practice may lead to conflicts resulting from competing priorities and goals between departments, or between the department and the organization as a whole.